Mosaic Theater Company Announces New Play Commission for Women Playwrights and Season Four Reading Series
Commission honors the legacy of long-time Mosaic supporter and writer Trish Vradenburg

WASHINGTON, DC—Mosaic Theater Company announces a new initiative to support women playwrights, The Trish Vradenburg Play Commission. The Commission will honor the late Vradenburg’s creative wit and contributions to the arts by providing resources and support for emerging women playwrights locally and nationally.

“Trish was an optimistic, comedic, witty writer and an early, pioneering friend of Mosaic Theater Company,” notes Ari Roth, Mosaic Founding Artistic Director. “This commission named in her memory will ensure that women’s voices are at the forefront of our repertoire. Our intention to commission local and national playwrights will provide opportunities for DC-based artists to generate and present work, helping Mosaic engage with the finest writers in the country on subject matter closest to our mission, enriching the local performing arts ecosystem.”

Established by the late Trish Vradenburg’s husband, George Vradenburg and The Vradenburg Foundation, the commission will provide Mosaic with a four-year $100,000 grant to underwrite the research, development, workshopping, and production of new work. Early moneys from the grant have underwritten new play residencies for Ifa Bayeza, author of The Till Trilogy and Mona Mansour, whose world premiere staging of The Vagrant Trilogy marked Mosaic’s final production of Season Three. Season Four’s first commitment will be a “completion commission” to provide local playwright Allyson Currin with support to expand her comedy, Sooner/Later (additional commission initiatives will be announced later this season). In seasons Five and Six, Mosaic will use the Trish Vradenburg Commission to support both a female playwright in the Washington DC metropolitan area to develop an original play or musical as part of its Locally Grown Mosaic initiative, as well as supporting a major female playwright of national standing to bring new work to Mosaic’s stage.

In addition to the Trish Vradenburg Commission, Mosaic will continue its tradition of producing a robust reading series as a complement to mainstage programming. This series will feature three works from local authors: East of the River with book, music and lyrics by Star Johnson (in partnership with the Anacostia Musical Theatre Lab); A Moving Picture by Jennie Berman Eng; and Notes on Baldwin’s Notes of a Native Son by Psalmayene 24 (as a counter-point to Native Son, also directed by Psalmayene 24). The Scream and The Silence by Motti Lerner will round out the series as part of the Voices from a Changing Middle East Festival.
About Trish Vradenburg
Trish Vradenburg was an American playwright; television writer for *Designing Women, Kate and Allie,* and *Family Ties;* and a tireless advocate for the search for a cure for Alzheimer’s disease. She wrote the acclaimed plays *The Apple Doesn’t Fall...* (which ran on Broadway and at the Tiffany Theater in Los Angeles) and *Surviving Grace* (produced at The Kennedy Center and Off-Broadway at the Union Square Theatre), both of which depicted the experience of being an Alzheimer’s caregiver for her mother. In 1986 Macmillan Publishers published her novel, *Liberated Lady,* which was chosen as Literary Guild and Doubleday Book Club selections. In 2008, with her husband George, Trish founded US Against Alzheimer’s, a national advocacy network dedicated to stopping Alzheimer’s by the year 2020. Trish and George also served as co-publishers of *Tikkun,* a bi-monthly English-language magazine that analyzed American and Israeli culture, politics, religion, and history from a progressive viewpoint and provided commentary about Israeli politics and Jewish life in North America.

Additional Information about Season Four Reading Series
*All Reading are at The Atlas Performing Arts Center. All tickets are $15.*

East of the River
*Book, music and lyrics by Star Johnson*
*In partnership with the Anacostia Musical Theatre Lab*
*Monday, September 24 at 7 PM*
*Part of Locally Grown Mosaic*
Based on conversations with local Anacostia residents, community members respond to a newly proposed Whole Foods set to open in Ward 8 as part of an urban revitalization project that threatens to gentrify the historic neighborhood. Developed in partnership with the Anacostia Musical Theatre Lab and sponsored by ARCH Development, interviews were conducted to create an original musical about the rapid changes befalling Anacostia, along with other transitioning neighborhoods across DC—including H Street NE—challenging the historic character and soul of our teeming city.

A Moving Picture
*By Jennie Berman Eng*
*Directed by Kate Bryer*
*Monday, November 19 at 7 PM*
*Part of Locally Grown Mosaic*
Shunned A-List screenwriter Solzberg is slumming it, teaching a class about Genocide on Film for screenwriting students at NYU. When his student Ivy writes a novel screenplay about women in a Mercedes Benz labor camp, Solzberg recognizes an opportunity to change Hollywood and right his own wrongs. Presented in collaboration with Spooky Action Theatre.

The Scream and The Silence
*By Motti Lerner*
*Directed by Derek Goldman*
*Monday, January 14 at 7 PM*
A literary and political drama that takes place in the weeks after the tantalizing possibilities and ultimate failure of the 2000 Camp David summit. Nathan Donino, a Moroccan Israeli writer, invites two Palestinian colleagues to create a public discourse that will showcase the possibilities of reconciliation. As the three embark on a moral journey to change the consciousness of their readers, they are no match against the cynical manipulations of their respective political leaders, Barak and Arafat, who make periodic visits into Nathan’s fevered, fractured mind.

Notes on Baldwin’s Notes of a Native Son (or Les Deux Noirs)
By Psalmayene 24
Directed by Raymond Caldwell
Sunday, April 13 and 28 at 5 PM
Part of Locally Grown Mosaic
Set in 1953 in Paris, the Helen Hayes Award-winning director of Mosaic’s Native Son fictionalizes the actual meeting between Richard Wright and James Baldwin at the legendary Paris hangout, Les Deux Magots. Exploring the tension between James Baldwin’s searing critiques of Native Son and Richard Wright’s unbridled indignation at Baldwin’s criticism, this new play reimagines the confrontation of these two mighty African-American artists with echoes of a present-day rap battle.

Sooner/Later
By Allyson Currin
Directed by Gregg Henry
May 15-June 16, 2019
Part of Locally Grown Mosaic
Inaugural offering of the Trish Vradenburg Play Commission
When teenage daughter Lexie helps her reluctant single mother Nora re-enter the dating scene, an unlikely suitor emerges in Griff—the guy at the coffee shop who inadvertently witnesses Nora’s string of unsuccessful dates. As choices collide with coincidences and longing mixes with reality, each character must face the complications that always arise in the search for intimacy and the closeness of family. This captivating world premiere with a metaphysical twist navigates the paths of romance, marriage, and parenting while exploring the pains and pleasures of all three.

About Mosaic Theater Company of DC
Independent, intercultural, entertaining, and uncensored, Mosaic Theater Company of DC is committed to making transformational, socially-relevant art, producing plays by authors on the front lines of conflict zones, and building a fusion community to address some of the most pressing issues of our times. Dedicated to making our theater a model of diversity and inclusion at every stratum, on stage and off, Mosaic invests in the new as we keep abreast of our changing and challenging times to ensure that our theater is a responsive gathering space, all the while nurturing and producing art of the highest order. Visit us at mosaictheater.org.